

VZCZCXRO7373
RR RUEHBZ RUEH DU RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHLS #0769 3071238
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 031238Z NOV 09 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7410
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP 0187
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 000769

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/31/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ZA](#)

SUBJECT: ZAMBIAN GOVERNMENT TERMINATES TASK FORCE ON
CORRUPTION: CARE AND RESPONSIBILITY TRANSFERRED TO
ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION

REF: A. LUSAKA 654

[B](#). LUSAKA 693

Classified By: Ambassador Donald E. Booth for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#). (SBU) Vice President George Kunda announced October 30 that the Zambian government (GRZ) had placed the Task Force on Corruption (TFC) under the authority of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) -- effectively neutralizing it. The ACC will prosecute TFC's corruption cases, including former president Frederick Chiluba's case (ref A). Although the GRZ retained TFC prosecutor Mutembo Nchito, most cases will go to government prosecutors. Kunda asserted that the TFC had "executed its mandate" and that eliminating it was "in line with national anti-corruption policy." The ACC will also establish a financial intelligence unit and departments dealing with fraud and money laundering.

[2](#). (SBU) Kunda blamed the TFC's demise on the halt in donor funding (which occurred in late 2007 when the Mwanawasa administration refused to extend the scope of the TFC's investigations to include Mwanawasa's first term). The GRZ has complained that the TFC is expensive because it utilizes private lawyers.

[3](#). (C) Transparency International Zambia (TIZ) President Reuben Lifuka accused the GRZ of disbanding the TFC to halt prosecution of Chiluba's corruption cases. NGO Southern Africa Center for Constructive Resolution of Disputes (SACCORD) Director Lee Habusonda told PolOff November 2 he concurred and said 18 CSO representatives -- including TIZ and SACCORD -- will meet in November to formulate a response to the TFC's demise. Habusonda said that the CSOs had lost momentum mobilizing the public against the GRZ' weak commitment to fight corruption but were re-energized by this announcement (ref B). Kunda accused civil society of self-interest and noted that "organizations such as TIZ get money from outside (i.e. donors). It is difficult for us to differentiate between a political agenda and the fight against corruption."

[4](#). (C) COMMENT: The GRZ' unsurprising decision to shutter the TFC is seen by many in Zambia as another attempt to undermine anti-corruption investigation. Disbanding the TFC and putting all responsibility for anti-corruption investigations/prosecutions in the heretofore relatively complacent ACC raises questions about the GRZ's commitment to pursuing corruption regardless of who might be involved. The ACC lacks the mandate and political will to champion the TFC's fights. TFC prosecutor Mutembo Nchito told PolOffs ACC Director Godfrey Kayukwa has never won a corruption case. While the GRZ continues to invoke anti-corruption rhetoric to convince the public of its commitment to fight it, disbandment of the TFC so soon after the controversial Chiluba case verdict suggests otherwise. END COMMENT.
BOOTH